



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Department of Commerce



Issued: July 27, 2011

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND SCOPING MEETINGS

**In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for the Orono Substation Expansion
and new 115 kV Transmission Line Project**

PUC Docket Number: E002/TL-11-223

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) will conduct public information and environmental assessment (EA) scoping meetings at the times and location listed below, on the route permit application Xcel Energy for the proposed 115 kV Orono Substation Replacement and New 115 kV Transmission Line Project. The purpose of the meetings is to provide information to the public about the project and to identify issues and alternatives to study in an EA that will be prepared by EFP staff.

Public Information and Scoping Meetings

**Wednesday, August 10, 2011
6:00 p.m.**

**Orono City Hall
Council Chambers
2750 Kelley Parkway
Orono, MN 55356
952-249-4600**

During the meetings, EFP staff will give a presentation about the state's high voltage transmission line (HVTL) permitting process, the proposed project, and how the public can participate. Xcel Energy will have representatives at the public meetings who can answer general questions about the proposed project. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions, present comments, and propose issues, impacts and alternatives to be studied in the EA.

Review copies of the route permit application, permitting process flowcharts, and comment forms will be available at the meeting.

The EFP will accept written comments on the scope of the EA until Friday, August 26, 2011. Please include PUC Docket No. TL-11-223 on all comments. Comments may be submitted on the Commissions energy facility permitting website, <http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us>, or may be mailed, emailed, or faxed to:

Suzanne Steinhauer
State Permit Manager
Minnesota Department of Commerce
Energy Facility Permitting
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota, 55101-2198
Fax: 651-296-2888
suzanne.steinhauer@state.mn.us

Project Description. The Project, as proposed by the Applicant, would replace the existing 69 kV Orono Substation with a new 115 kV Substation at the same location, but with a larger footprint. The Project would connect the new substation to the existing Xcel Energy 115 kV transmission line 0831 through a new double circuit 115 kV transmission lines of approximately 2,040 feet. The Project, as proposed, would also remove approximately 1,030 feet of 115 kV transmission line and replace it with approximately 1,100 feet of new single circuit 115 kV transmission line. While not part of the Route Permit requested by Xcel Energy, approximately 400 feet of the existing Great River Energy 69 kV transmission line BD would be rerouted around the new Orono Substation.

Xcel Energy proposes to use steel single-pole structures with spans of approximately 300 to 500 feet between poles; structure heights are anticipated to range from 70 to 90 feet for the single-circuit structures to 75 to 115 feet for the double-circuit structures. Xcel Energy is requesting a route width of approximately 400 feet, or 200 feet either side of the proposed alignment shown in the Application maps. The anticipated right-of-way for the new transmission line would be 75 feet.

The Project is located entirely within the city of Orono in Hennepin County. The Project will cost approximately \$5.3 million dollars.

Review Process. In Minnesota, no person may construct a high-voltage transmission line without a route permit from the Commission (Minnesota Statute 216E.03, subdivision 2). A high-voltage transmission line is defined as a conductor of electric energy designed for and capable of operation at a voltage of 100 kV or more and is greater than 1,500 feet in length (Minnesota Statute 216E.01, subdivision 4). The project as proposed would consist of approximately 4.7 miles of new 115 kV transmission line and would therefore require a route permit from the Commission. Because the proposed transmission line capacity is under 200 kV, less than ten miles in length, and does not cross a state border, a certificate of need is not required (Minnesota Statute 216B.2421, subdivision 2).

A route permit application for the project was filed under the alternative permitting process by Xcel Energy on June 7, 2011. The project is eligible for consideration under the alternative permitting process, as the transmission line voltage would be between 100 and 200 kilovolts (Minnesota Rules 7850.2800, subpart 2B). The application was accepted as complete by the Commission on June 30, 2011. The Commission has six months from the time the application is accepted to complete the alternative permitting process and make a decision on a route permit.

Route permit applications for high-voltage transmission lines are subject to environmental review (Minnesota Rules 7850). For this project, EFP staff will prepare an environmental assessment. The environmental assessment contains information on the potential human and environmental effects of

the proposed project, includes possible alternative routes or route segments, and examines mitigating measures for anticipated effects.

Further information on Minnesota statutes and rules governing the routing process are available on the following website: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/TransmissionLines.html>.

EFP Review – Environmental Assessment. EFP staff is responsible for conducting the environmental review for route permit applications submitted to the Commission (Minn. Rules 7850.3700). Environmental review for a project of this size requires the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA). An EA examines the potential human and environmental impacts of a proposed project, alternative routes for the project, and potential mitigative measures. EFP staff conducts a public information meeting to gather comments and suggestions on the proposed project in order to focus the content or “scope” of the environmental assessment.

Public Hearing. Upon completion of the environmental assessment, a public hearing will be held where the public will be afforded the opportunity to make oral presentation, provide documentary evidence, and ask questions of Xcel Energy and EFP staff. Notice of the hearing will be published in local newspapers and mailed to persons who register their names on the project mailing list. The public hearing will be held in the county where the proposed project would be located.

Eminent Domain. If issued a route permit by the Commission, the Applicants may exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire land for this project pursuant to Minnesota Statute 216E.12.

Project Mailing List. Persons should contact the state permit manager or public advisor (noted below) or register online at: www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us to get their name on the project mailing list. Persons on the mailing list will receive notices of meetings/hearings and notices of document availability for this project. **If you do not register to be on the mailing list you will not receive correspondence regarding this project after this notice.** Registration to the project mailing list is voluntary and may be done at any time.

Project Documents. A more detailed description of the proposed project is contained in the route permit application; an electronic versions of this document is available on the Commission’s energy facility permitting website:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=32082>

Additionally, documents are available on the Commission’s eDockets system:
<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (enter the year “11” and the number “223”).

The route permit applications are also available at the locations noted below:

Orono City Hall
Planning and Zoning Department
2750 Kelley Parkway
Orono, MN 55356

Maple Plain Library
5184 Main Street East
Maple Plain, MN 55359

Long Lake Library
1865 Wayzata Boulevard West
Long Lake, MN 55365

Project Contacts. The EFP has designated staff member Suzanne Steinhauer (651-296-2888, suzanna.steinhauer@state.mn.us) as Project Manager and Ray Kirsch (651-296-7588, raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us) as Public Advisor. You may contact them at: Department of Commerce, Energy Facility Permitting, 85 7th Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, MN 55101-2198. Other contact information: Toll-Free: 1-800-657-3794, Fax: 651-297-7891 or TTY: Minnesota Relay Services, 1-800-627-3529, and ask for the Department of Commerce.

Xcel Energy. Information about this project is available from Xcel Energy. You can direct questions to Joseph G. Sedarski (612-330-6435, joseph.g.sedarski@xcelenergy.com). Mr. Sedarski may be contacted in writing at: Xcel Energy, 414 Nicollet Mall, MP-8, Minneapolis, MN 55401.

This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e., large print or audio) by calling 651.296.00391 (voice). Persons with hearing or speech disabilities may call us through Minnesota Relay at 1.800.627.3529 or by dialing 711.